

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SOE-02 AF-10 ARA-10

CIAE-00 DODE-00 EA-10 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03

NASA-01 NEA-10 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OIC-02 SP-02 PA-01

DOE-11 CEQ-01 OES-07 SS-15 USIA-06 NRC-05 /155 W

-----092884 132142Z /75

R 131731Z MAR 78

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7147

INFO USMISSION USNATO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, UN

SUBJECT: NGO CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

REF: (2) GENEVA 3345, (B) USNATO 2378

1. SOVIET BLOC NGO REPRESENTATIVES AND THEIR SUPPORTING PERSONALITIES AMONG THE ORGANIZERS AND OFFICERS OF THE NGO CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT, WHICH WAS HELD IN UN FACILITIES IN GENEVA FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 2, WORKED ASSIDUOUSLY TO FOCUS THE CONFERENCE ON THE "NEUTRON BOMB" QUESTION. WHILE THERE WERE PRACTICAL LIMITATIONS TO WHAT THEY COULD ACHIEVE UNDER THE CONSENSUS ADOPTION RULES OF THE CONFERENCE AND ITS FOUR SEPARATE COMMISSIONS, THEY SUCCEEDED IN OBTAINING IN THE "MESSAGE" FROM THE CONFERENCE TO THE SSOD(A) EXPLICIT IDENTIFICATION OF THE "NEUTRON BOMB" AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF NEW WEAPONS ON WHICH PROGRESS CAN AND MUST BE MADE IN THE FIELD OF DISARMAMENT, AND (B) A RECOMMENDATION BY THE CONFERENCE FOR A NEW CONVENTION PROHIBITING THE PRODUCTION OR DEPLOYMENT OF ANY SUCH NEW WEAPONS.

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ACCOMMODATION TO SOVIET BLOC SENSIBILITIES WAS SOMEWHAT MORE EASILY ARRANGED IN THE OUTCOME STATEMENTS OF COMMISSION DISCUSSIONS IN WHICH, FOR EXAMPLE, THE ROLE OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES WAS SINGLED OUT (AS WERE THE ROLES PLAYED BY THE NON-ALIGNED NATIONS, LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS) AS A "POSITIVE FACTOR FOR DISARMAMENT."

2. CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN SEAN MACBRIDE IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT TO PLENARY RAISED THE NEUTRON BOMB ISSUE AND URGED POSTPONEMENT OF THE MAY NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING IN VIEW OF ITS COINCIDENCE WITH THE SSOD. NOT TO DO SO, MACBRIDE STATED, WOULD BE AN "EXPRESSION OF CONTEMPT FOR THE UN." WHILE SUGGESTED TO A FAIRLY RECEPTIVE AUDIENCE, THE IDEA WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN MACBRIDE'S ALONE (THE IRISH AMBASSADOR BELIEVES SO), AND APPEARS NOT TO HAVE BEEN PURSUED WITH ANY VIGOR BY ANYONE THEREAFTER IN THE CONFERENCE SESSIONS.

3. AMERICAN NGO REPRESENTATIVES WITH WHOM THE MISSION HAD CONTACT HELD VARIOUS VIEWS ABOUT THE CONFERENCE, BUT THOSE WE SPOKE WITH GENERALLY AGREED IN THE ASSESSMENTS THEY VOLUNTEERED ABOUT THE MAJOR EFFORT WHICH HAD BEEN MADE BEHIND THE SCENES, FINANCIALLY AND ORGANIZATIONALLY, BY THE SOVIET BLOC REPRESENTATIVES, WORKING MAINLY THROUGH THE WORLD PEACE COUNCIL. ONE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HIS AIR FARE AND AN ADD-ON TRIP TO HELSINKI HAD BEEN FURNISHED BY THE WORLD PEACE COUNCIL, AND ASSUMED THIS HAD BEEN DONE FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF OTHERS. ANOTHER, AND MUCH MORE CRITICAL AMERICAN NGO REPRESENTATIVE EVALUATED THE CONFERENCE AND ITS OUTCOME AS A CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED AND HEAVILY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FINANCED MANEUVER ENABLING THE WORLD PEACE COUNCIL TO PROJECT ITS LEADERSHIP "INTO THE UN TENT" WITH ITS PRESIDENT (ROMESH CHANDRA) ON THE PODIUM AS GENERAL RAPPORTEUR. (THE INTERNAL IN-FIGHTING BETWEEN MACBRIDE AND HIS AMERICAN COUNTERPART IN THE NGO ORGANIZING STRUCTURE FOR THE CONFERENCE, WHICH HAD ELIMINATED THE LATTER, WAS ALSO RAISED IN THIS CONNECTION.) A MARCH ORGANIZED JOINTLY IN DOWNTOWN GENEVA ON FEBRUARY 26 BY THE WORLD PEACE COUNCIL AND THE SWISS PEACE MOVEMENT WAS LESS IMPRESSIVE, ATTRACTING ONLY SOME 300 PERSONS.

4. COMMENT: DISCUSSIONS WITH AMERICAN NGO REPRESENTATIVES AND OTHERS PAINT A MIXED PICTURE OF SINCERITY OF PURPOSE AMONG MOST CONFEREES COUPLED WITH ACUTE AWARENESS OF THE ORCHESTRATION BEHIND THE SCENES TO WHICH THE CONFERENCE WAS SUBJECTED. MOST OF THESE REPRESENTATIVES WERE, HOWEVER, OLD HANDS AT THIS GAME IN THE NGO SETTING AND SEEMED TO TAKE IT IN STRIDE. THEIR CRITICISM TENDED TO BE DIRECTED INSTEAD AT THE INDISPOSITION OF THE US GOVERNMENT TO BECOME MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN AN NGO ACTIVITY IN WHICH THEY

FELT THE HEAVY INFLUENCE OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS,
SPECIFICALLY THOSE OF THE SOVIET BLOC. THEY
ACKNOWLEDGED SOME FRUSTRATION THAT THEIR OWN DISPOSITIONS
ON DISARMAMENT QUESTIONS LEFT THEM VULNERABLE TO
MANEUVERINGS AND UNBALANCED RESULTS. WITHOUT HAVING
ANY PRECISE IDEAS TO OFFER, THEY TENDED TO SEE THIS AS
A VACUUM THE USG SHOULD EITHER FILL OR ARRANGE TO HAVE
FILLED BY PRIVATE US REPRESENTATION CAPABLE OF
BALANCING THE ARGUMENTS IN AN AUTHORITATIVE WAY.

5. THE CONFERENCE CANNOT BE SEEN AS ENTIRELY A
SOVIET BLOC SUCCESS, OF COURSE, AND AMERICAN REPRE-

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NASA-01 NEA-10 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OIC-02 SP-02 PA-01
DOE-11 CEQ-01 OES-07 SS-15 USIA-06 NRC-05 /155 W
-----092894 132141Z /75

R 131731Z MAR 78
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SENTATIVES GENERALLY WERE AGREED THAT SOVIET BLOC
REPRESENTATIVES HAD DISPLAYED MORE THAN USUAL
ACCOMMODATION APPARENTLY IN THE INTEREST OF SECURING
HARMONIOUS ADOPTION OF THE OUTCOME THEY SOUGHT,
NOTABLY ON THE "NEUTRON BOMB" ISSUE. (THIS,
TOGETHER POSSIBLY WITH AVERSION AT LINKING MILITARY PACT
MEETINGS TO THE UN CALENDAR, MAY ACCOUNT FOR THE LITTLE
INTEREST SHOWN IN THE MACBRIDE PROPOSAL TO CALL FOR
DEFERRAL OF THE NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING.) INDEED,
WITH THE HORN OF AFRICA IN THE HEADLINES, THE OPENING
PORTION OF THE CONFERENCE MESSAGE TO THE SSOD CONTAINS
AN AT LEAST AMBIGUOUS EXPRESSION OF GRAVE CONCERN
ABOUT "THE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE ARMS RACE ON
CURRENT TENSIONS AND ARMED CONFLICTS." SORENSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISARMAMENT, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GENEVA03913
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780112-0048
Format: TEL
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780377/aaaacmtl.tel
Line Count: 169
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 505474c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ACDA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 GENEVA 3345, 78 USNATO 2378
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3355439
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NGO CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
TAGS: PARM, UN, NGO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/505474c8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014